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CIA MEMO

6 November 1963

SUBJECT : Halberstam's New York Times Article of 6 November Entitled "Coup in Saigon: A Detailed Account"

1. On the face of it this appears to be a pretty impressive account of the coup plot of 1 November. It is obvious that Halberstam has talked to many witnesses (American and Vietnamese) of the coup action and has succeeded in piecing together a fairly detailed narrative of exactly what took place. Only one of his facts appears to be off and that is that Halberstam reports that Ngo Dinh Diem called Ambassador Lodge at 4:00 a.m. (presumably 2 November), whereas we know that Diem called the Ambassador at 4:30 p.m. on 1 November or some three hours after the coup began.

2. Halberstam's account of how the coup plot was woven [redacted] It places Gen. Ton That Dinh in a central role in the plotting brotherhood, [redacted] In other words, Halberstam's story (much of it) revolves around the deception of Diem and Nhu by Gen. Dinh and ascribes the very success of the coup to Dinh's skillful treachery at a key time. [redacted] Halberstam's assertion that Dinh was beginning to have doubts about the Ngo brothers at the end of August and that the other generals played upon this to bring him over to their side in the conspiracy.

3. [redacted] Until we do obtain a clearer picture of what actually went on, it will be difficult to comment in any more detail on the overall accuracy of Halberstam's reporting concerning the internal forces and persons within the inner circle of the coup. [redacted]

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BY [illegible] NARS, DATE 6/85

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